

# The Brethren Evangelist.

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## The Unfailing One.

He who hath led, will lead,  
All through the wilderness;  
He who hath fed will feed;  
He who hath blessed will bless;  
He who hath heard thy cry  
Will never close his ear;  
He who hath marked thy faintest sigh  
Will not forget thy tear.  
He loveth always, faileth never;  
So rest on him to-day, forever!

He who hath made thee whole  
Will heal thee day by day,  
He who hath spoke unto thy soul,  
Hath many things to say;  
He who hath gently taught  
Yet more will make thee know;  
He who so wondrously hath wrought,  
Yet greater things will show.  
He loveth always, faileth never;  
So rest on him to-day, forever!

—FRANCES R. HAVERGAL.

## The Primitive Church and Its Customs.

### THE PRESBYTER.

The name of Presbyter or Elder was derived from the Greek translation of the New Testament, and its meaning is ruler or governor; and it is admitted by all reasonable scholars, that in the New Testament it is used instead of bishop, and even the Apostles did not refuse to be designated by that name, such is its dignity. There is no question about the truthfulness of the statement, that many churches were entirely under the government of men who only bore the title of elder; and it was only in the very large churches, such as Antioch, Ephesus, Smyrna, Jerusalem, etc., where a superior office bearing the name of bishop, was maintained, and where the church machinery was so complicated and extensive that a general head in one person was an actual necessity.

The celebrated Dr. Hammond says, That in Scripture times the name Presbyter belonged principally, if not alone, to bishops; and there is no evidence that any of this second order were then instituted, though soon after there were such instituted in all churches and cites Clemens and Epiphanius as authority, who say at first there were bishops and deacons without any elders. But this is brought too far to be useful. It is very evident that Timothy was the bishop of Ephesus, and had elders and deacons under him, and he was not to be overbearing in his functions, but entreat elders as a father. The truth is that all the churches throughout Christendom did not have a uniform custom and practice in all things, because circumstances were such that it was impossible; hence, some churches had a bishop, elders and deacons, others a bishop and deacons, and others elders and deacons, and where there were only a few members, the whole function was vested in an elder. Consequently when a writer undertakes to establish a system of church offices and allows no deviation in any case, the New Testament and history both stand against him.

It has already been stated in a former article that the presbyter could do almost any official act, by the consent of his bishop, or in his absence, except performing ordinations. Their office was held to be one of such im-

portance, that the bishop never done any unusual act, outside of his routine duties, without consulting his presbyters and obtaining their consent. Hence, they were allowed to sit together with the bishop in the church—an honor which the deacons were never allowed to share—and sat in and took part in the councils of the church. The several offices are sometimes spoken of as thrones in one age of the church, as Gregory Nazianzen, in referring to his ordination as presbyter, says, his father brought him by violence to the second throne; and Constantine, when writing to Chrestus, bishop of Syracuse, summoning him to the council of Arles, ordered him to bring two of the second throne, two presbyters. The Apostolic Constitutions recognize the association of the presbyters in councils in these words: Let also a double portion be set apart for the presbyters, as for such who labor continually about the Word and doctrine, upon the account of the Apostles of the Lord, whose place they sustain, as the counsellors of the bishop, and the crown of the church. This expression is probably taken from the custom of the arrangement of seats of honor in the primitive church houses. The chairs were arranged in a semi-circle, with the largest chair for the bishop in the center, and those of the presbyters on each side. The bishop's chair was called the middle throne, and the presbyters', the second thrones.

The early records of the church are rich in proof of the dignified position of the elder of the church. He took part in the councils, in the duty of governing the church, performed all the official functions belonging to the general work of the church, and laid hands on with the bishop in ordinations. The bishop was only superior to him in two respects; he pronounced the ceremony of ordination and occupied the highest place in governing the church.

### A Strange Statement.

Henry King, D. D., in an article on "The Prayer Book and Baptism," in the *Examiner* says: "Sprinkling is absolutely unauthorized by the Prayer Book, and any member of the Episcopal church, or any other church, who has accepted sprinkling for baptism is unbaptized, and any rector who substitutes sprinkling for baptism is violating not only the requirements of God's Word but the canons of his own church." The church of England and the Episcopal church, in the United States, have always held that trine immersion is valid baptism; and it has been only through the recent centuries that pouring and sprinkling have been practiced; and as Doctor King asserts, it was never authorized by the old Episcopal Prayer Book. The Prayer Book authorized trine immersion; but recent editions of the Book, place immersion first, and then, "or sprinkle" second, which gives a sort of license for the present practice.

## The Religious World.

The Parsonage Loan Fund of the Congregationalists now amounts to over \$37,000.

A fine Congregationalist church was dedicated May 3 in Helena, Montana. It cost \$10,000.

The next Church Congress in England will be held at Portsmouth, opening on Oct. 6th.

According to official statistics, France now has 650,000 Protestant inhabitants, in 870 parishes.

The Channel Islands are the most completely Methodist population in the world. Out of less than 90,000 inhabitants the Methodist chapels supply sittings for 18,000.

For nearly a year, a committee of twelve clergymen, appointed by the Bishop of New York, have been busy preparing for the series of services to be held in the prominent Episcopal churches the coming advent.

In Bohemia Spiritualism is taking such alarming dimensions that the Bishop has caused a declaration to be made from the pulpit placing it on a par with heresy, and stating that whoever persists in it will be refused absolution after confession.

The Methodists of Georgia are interested in the conversion of the Jews, and have a mission organized for that purpose. The Rev. Jacob Freshman, evangelist to the Hebrews in New York city, has been preaching throughout Georgia and Florida to the furtherance of that cause.

Sixteen years ago there were in the State of Kansas 43 Presbyterian churches, and 1,453 members. Now there are in that State 321 churches, and 14,298 members. There have been organized in that State an average of nineteen churches a year for sixteen years, and every one of those churches owes its existence to the aid given by the mission board.

The colored people in their ecclesiastical assemblies have some very unique and clever ways of doing things. At the late Virginia Baptist (colored) Convention an enthusiastic member said: "Let every one here who takes a Baptist paper hold up his hand." Up went the hands, and just then the editor of the Baptist Companion cried out: "Now let those who pay for their papers hold up their hands." It was a fine hit and not so many hands went up.

It will be a matter of interest to many Christian workers to learn of the efficient instruction in Bible study that is given at the Bible Institute, in Farwell Hall, Chicago. The eager faces of the students, their diligent and faithful work, bear testimony to their appreciation of the efficient teaching of Prof. Moorehead. Experienced and educated teachers seem to find equal delight with those who are receiving their first training. A most cordial invitation to attend the morning and evening exercises, is extended to all who desire to become acquainted with Christian work.

It is announced that the Annual Conference of the British Branch of the Evangelical Alliance will be held at Glasgow in October.

A Presbyterian minister has just presented Queen Victoria with a small plow made of spears, swords and dirks. The Queen has accepted the gift.

The Bible has been translated in whole or in part, in sixty-eight of two hundred and forty-three languages, and two hundred and ninety-six dialects of India, only three of which were published before 1804.

Recent deciphering of the cuneiform inscriptions on the Babylonian tablets in the British Museum revealed 26 names mentioned in Genesis, and confirmed the Biblical record of the migration of Abram from Ur of the Chaldees.

Bishop Stevens from the Protestant Episcopal church has decided that women are eligible as members of the vestry; the question having come up through the choosing of two ladies for the vestry of a church in the Philadelphia diocese.

Henry Ward Beecher has been engaged in attempting to fathom that deep and mysterious theory that man has sprung from the lower orders, and threatens to wrestle with yet deeper questions than this in his autumnal series of discourses. It is possible that "Brother" Beecher will get down so very deep in his researches that those whose chief aim is upward will be afraid to follow him.

An English High Church guide-book recently published states that in England there are now 869 churches at which altar lights are used, 38 where incense is burnt, 1,463 always open for private prayer, 449 where vestments are worn, and 2,858 where "the Eastward position" is taken. These figures show a large increase since the previous edition of the guide was issued.

A German Catholic Palestine Society has been organized for work in the interest of the Catholic church in the Holy Land. A hospice is to be erected in Jerusalem, in connection with a church school and hospital. The object is to missionize among the natives. One of the largest buildings in Jerusalem and a piece of land on the way to Emmaus have been purchased by the Society.

The Rev. John Brown, minister of the Bunyan meeting house at Bedford, England, has just completed an important work on the life and times of his famous predecessor, the author of "Pilgrim's Progress," for which he has been engaged for many years in collecting materials. The MS. records of his church, dating back to Bunyan's time, contain some interesting information, never before given to the public. Mr. Brown has been able to trace the Bunyan family as far back as the end of the twelfth century.

## Semi-Editorial.

One of our correspondents says: "And others standing without listening to the word." I first read it, "And others standing, without listening to the word;" but concluded that it was hardly what the writer meant, and next time read it, and others standing without, listening to the word." It's all just as a body takes it.

I am grateful to sister Laura Slotter for that invitation. That makes two invitations and both from sisters. What data these items will furnish to the historian who shall write the history of the Brethren Church under the sub-head of Ashland College. We have also a few letters salted down that will make interesting reading in that connection. But it is said the darkest hour is just before the day. Hope we may soon see the dawning of the light. It seems to me that it is dark enough to us now.

I was glad to notice the EVANGELIST express itself so freely against the lodge, in the last issue. It is, indeed, high time that the church should take a bold stand against secretism, and lodge worship. If Jesus be the Christ, then we do not want to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; but if Baal, Mahommed, or Jo Smith or any other, be just as good a god, then let us all go to the lodge and worship the miscellaneous god, and have "a jolly good time."

Eld. Moses Miller, a German Baptist bishop of Cumberland Co., Pa., and whom C. H. Balsaugh delights to honor, is dead and buried. Eld. D. P. Saylor, of Maryland, has also passed away. There is no comparison between them in point of ability, though both were popular with Annual Meeting advocates.

I expect to be at North Manchester, Ind., over Sunday, Aug. 2nd, and beg for the College. Am now at Elkhart.

Faternally,  
H. R. HOLSINGER.

## Dedications.

The Brethren of North Manchester, Ind., will dedicate their church on Sunday, August 2nd. A general invitation is extended to all the Brethren and friends to be with us at that time.

The Brethren of the Bunker Hill congregation will dedicate their church, Sunday, August 9th. All are invited; bring your baskets filled, so that none need go home for dinner. Services at 10 A. M., and 3 P. M.

WM. W. SUMMERS.

The line of life is a ragged diagonal between duty and desire. Thou hast a double nature. Choose between the worst and the better: that is within thee. Thou hast it in thy power to become a slave of luxury, the slave of sensual power, the slave of corruption. Thou hast it in thy power to become a free master of thyself, to become the everlasting benefactor of thy country, and the unfailing champion of thy God.—Dean Stanley.